

M - 216,305

S - 298,557

OCT 28 1970

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# Strange Kind Of History

If "Lamia" turned out to be another alias for Spy-Who-Came-in-out-of-the-Cold author John le Carre, it would be a lot easier to accept than as advertised, the code name for De Gaulle's chief of intelligence in Washington. If half of what "Lamia" has written in a book published earlier this month with that title (344 pp. Little, Brown \$6.95) is true, then Henry Ford was right — "History is bunk."

The other half of "Lamia" can be dismissed as the vaporings of an intelligence-for-hire who was outsmarted by his employees and who is trying to get his own back.

"Lamia" became involved in intelligence work way back in 1943 when his knowledge of the country round and about the small town of Romorantin in the center of France enabled him to smuggle many people — especially Jews — across the Cher River from German-administered France into so-called free, Vichy-administered France. Caught up by the police on a trip to Paris when he was acting as a courier for British intelligence, he was forced to flee to North Africa by way of Spain and Portugal.

UP TO THIS point the history of "Lamia" is understated, a believable account of how the French underground developed under German occupation. A man here with special knowledge, another there irritated by the "Boche," got together and began taking concerted action cutting wires, blowing bridges and derailing trains. To this point history is intelligible as

the sacrifice of determined men to keep their liberties.

Once "Lamia" was in North Africa and assigned to work for the Free French, he began handling secret documents which convinced him that De Gaulle was less interested in assuring those liberties for all Frenchmen than in out-manoeuvring his competitor, General Giraud. At this point "Lamia's" view of history becomes a view of history as conspiracy. From now on the book reads like a clinical study in the psychic abnormalities of generals — mad, all mad. When Gen. De Lattre de Tassigny visited Washington in 1951 he was more preoccupied with getting five stars on his license plate than anything else. When, after 24 hours of bickering and the General could think of nothing else, he got his five stars. He was tearfully grateful. Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.

As I read "Lamia," the author was in on all the great decisions in the history of the world — not the East or the West, but the world — from 1943 until 1963. These involved Indochina when the United States was supporting the Vietminh led by Ho Chi Minh

and was misled into changing sides; Cuba, when he supplied reports to the CIA; Washington during the 1950's when he supplied Allen Dulles and Gen. Walter Bedell Smith with proof of how the Soviets had infiltrated the French government at the highest level.

TAKE ANY significant event in recent history from the trials in Warsaw of the French consul Robineau to the doings of the Red Hand who supported nationalists in Algiers and "Lamia" has the story behind the story. History for him has no continuity. History is the result of conspiracies.

The trouble with this view of history is that it is irrefutable, insidious. Who can attack this mountain of allegations and cut it down to a molehill. There are more insinuations — let alone outright accusations — here than a historian could review in a lifetime.

"Lamia" blew his cover on Oct. 18, 1963, when he walked out of the French embassy in Washington and headed for Mexico where he asked for political asylum under his real name P.L. Thyraud de Vosjoli. He stayed there for a year until he could apply for a visa to return to the United States as a visitor where he now lives as a political refugee.

If he were writing as a thriller writer, as an alias le Carre, there would be no problem. Writing as a serious, reliable witness to events of the last 20 years, he challenges the integrity of all the great participants, De Gaulle preeminently, and the view most of us have of history. For most of us history is the record of heroism; for him it is the blotter of vanities.

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